

EExecutive Summary

Under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1972 (NEPA), the National Park Service (NPS) is required to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to assess the potential impacts of a proposed plan and various alternatives to that plan. This is a summary of the Draft Development Concept Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (DCP/EIS) for the Jamestown Project, which presents and analyzes four action alternative plans for improvements at the Jamestown unit of Colonial National Historical Park (Colonial NHP) and the Jamestown National Historic Site owned and managed by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA).

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

Jamestown is a world-class cultural and historic treasure that needs to be promoted, explored, and fully presented to communicate its significance in history. Often overlooked, Jamestown Island is the site of the first permanent English colony in North America, predating Plymouth, Massachusetts, by more than a decade. It marks the time and place of the beginning of the history of this nation. Jamestown was the place where many cultures from three continents (North America, Africa, and Europe) came together to form a new society. They shaped each other's lives, adopted each other's ways, and established laws, customs, and a language that Americans use today. In addition, the meeting of America's first representative legislature occurred at Jamestown in 1619, and Jamestown served as the first capital of the colony of Virginia (1607-1699).

Jamestown Island is an archaeological treasure of artifacts and other evidence of human activity

dating back over 12,000 years. It presents a unique opportunity for both visitors and researchers: there are very few 17th century sites with an existing archaeological collection and potential for additional collection that is within sight of its context. This highly unusual situation not only provides researchers and archaeologists with immediate access to information and materials processing, but it greatly enhances the visitor experience and their education. Since Jamestown contains many artifacts that are yet to be unearthed, the site, an active archaeological dig, presents huge possibilities for visitors to see the objects as they are being found. With this ongoing research and uncovering, the site will constantly evolve and grow in its body of research and discovery.

Based on Jamestown's importance to United States history and its unending opportunities for research and discovery, the overriding purpose of the Jamestown Project is for the APVA and NPS to jointly **research, protect, and present** to the public the resources at Jamestown. The APVA and NPS would like to capitalize on their strong partnership and recent discoveries to enhance educational and research opportunities and connect the visitor more closely with the site, its past peoples, and their experiences. In order to reach and educate the broadest possible audience, the Jamestown Project goals are to:

- Improve the Quality of the Visitor Experience
- Protect the Jamestown Collection and Associated Archival Materials
- Enhance Research and Educational Opportunities
- Strengthen the APVA/NPS Partnership

ALTERNATIVES

Five alternative plans for the Jamestown Project are presented in this DCP/EIS, including a No Action Alternative (Alternative A) that would continue current conditions and four action alternatives (Alternatives B, C, D, and E). The four action alternatives respond directly to the goals and issues identified in planning documents developed by the APVA and NPS.

The proposed plans for the Jamestown Project involve strategies for an updated interpretive experience; the improvement of facilities (including the current Visitor Center, collections storage, and parking); the addition of comfort/hospitality services and new interpretive venues; and enhanced and multimodal transportation options (including water taxis/tours, hike/bike trails, and shuttle services).

Alternative A

Alternative A, the No Action Alternative, assumes continuing current management practices at Jamestown Island and the Glasshouse without any substantive changes in facilities, infrastructure, or resource investment.

ALTERNATIVE A FACILITIES SUMMARY

Visitor Center – **30,000 sf**

Includes **300 sf** comfort station

Includes **4,000 sf** collections storage and curatorial lab

This concept, required by federal regulations, is used as the baseline for comparing the impacts of the other proposed alternatives. In Alternative A, current buildings remain with future programming, research, archaeological investigation, cultural landscape investigation, and maintenance operations as planned for both the APVA and the

NPS and their joint management goals. Alternative A would allow for any necessary changes to management and/or operations of the existing facilities over time.

The No Action Alternative would only allow for slight improvements to the visitor experience at Jamestown. Current facilities and interpretation would not have major modifications and are inadequate for the followings reasons:

- They do not do justice to the status of the historical site as one of supreme national importance and world significance.
- They do not encourage understanding of this status among the visiting public.
- They do not adequately convey the importance of the continued guardianship and research of the site.
- They do not successfully interpret the complexities of a many-layered story to the public.
- They do not have adequate opportunities to present new research to the public.
- They do not fully capitalize on the intense interest of visitors in the recent and ongoing archaeological work, process, and discoveries.
- They do not successfully encourage the visitor to explore the whole core historic site and outer Island.
- They do not present the immense wealth of both material cultural and natural resources to the public to the best possible degree, within the constraints of resource protection.
- They do not adequately inspire, engage, or otherwise motivate the visitor to want to find out more.

Therefore, the current status is not a fitting memorial to all the peoples who, through trial and tribulation, forged a new society at the site that became a new nation.

Alternative B

Alternative B, the Preferred Alternative, would maximize the interpretive use of the resource. It is also the only alternative to effectively address the current inadequate visitor experience in Alternative A and fully realize the *Jamestown Island Interpretive Plan*. The key proposed visitor facility structures are summarized below; each would perform very specific and individual tasks. Together they would create an exciting and diverse discovery experience of quality and vision, appropriate to the status of the site and its significance.

ALTERNATIVE B FACILITIES SUMMARY

Visitor Center/educational facility	19,000 sf
Collections storage, research, and curatorial	8,000 sf
Intermodal Transportation Terminal	2,000 sf
Observation Building	5,000 sf
TOTAL	34,000 sf

Intermodal Transportation Facility at Neck of Land: This facility would orient visitors to Jamestown Settlement, Jamestown Island, and other historic site opportunities and relationships in the immediate context of Jamestown. It would also offer the immense opportunity to provide contextual introductory interpretation along those routes. This interpretation would include the Island setting, prehistoric context, and natural environment. Further, this facility would serve as an essential node to allow transfer to alternative transportation routes to the Island. Visitors could choose alternate means of transport to the Island – by foot, bicycle,

boat, or shuttle. An extensive pedestrian/bicycle path would be aligned on the pre-1957 road trace before entering the Neck of Land marsh where it becomes a boardwalk, connecting to Jamestown Island by a pedestrian bridge over Back River.

Replacement Visitor Center/Educational Facility in the Island Parking Lot: This facility would serve as the point of arrival to Jamestown Island and would provide a sense of welcome for visitors. It would offer visitor support facilities, such as café, retail, and toilets, and an orientation to the Island and the core historic site. The major themes of the Jamestown storyline would be introduced and some collections would be displayed within temporary exhibition space. Dedicated educational and programming space would also be housed in this facility.

Observation Building: This facility would provide a unique interpretive experience, linking site views to artifacts and storylines. The building would contain significant collection's display space and would reuse the existing Visitor Center, though greatly reduced in size. The facility would provide the best point from which to view the Townsite in all directions and would allow visitors to prepare for an exploration of the site or to reinforce what they have already seen on the site. The building's design and displays would help to distribute visitors across the site, encouraging the experience of and use of the Island landscape. Finally, on a simple practical level, the Observation Building would provide relief from summer heat and flies, or winter rain and cold, as visitors cross and recross the extensive site.

APVA and NPS Collections and Research Center: This facility would provide a world-class research and collections storage and conservation facility and would offer easy access to joint collections and archives. Most importantly, it would allow for location in one facility of the Jamestown collection. This facility would also remove the NPS collection out of its current location in the basement of the existing 1956 Visitor Center and out of the threat of flood.

Intermodal Transportation: In Alternative B, the interpretive benefits of the modal transfers would be fully explored. Only in this alternative would the hike/bicycle route take visitors through the marsh areas north of the Island and directly onto the Island via a bridge (which has a historical precedent). This means of non-water access to the Island would be the only one to fully grasp the interpretive opportunities of the site and to allow them to be successfully achieved.

Exhibit Venues: In Alternative B, as well as the other action alternatives, new exhibit venues would be designed for the east and west ends of the historic Townsite. The eastern anchor would include the Ancient Planter exhibit, focusing on agricultural aspects of Jamestown's history and potentially including some experimental archaeology. The western anchor, the Ludwell exhibit facility, would also include experimental archaeology along with exhibits related to the Ludwell Statehouse Group and the trials and tribulations faced by the colonists.

Alternative C

In Alternative C, the division of functions is similar to Alternative B, with the major exception that the main facility on Neck of Land would house NPS collections in addition to visitor functions. Consequently, the proposed facility at Neck of Land is much larger in Alternative C than in Alternative B. Alternative C also proposes the Observation Building and exhibit venues, as they were described above under Alternative B.

Intermodal Transportation Terminal/Visitor Center/Educational Facility/NPS Collections and Research Facility: This one, large facility would house all of the functions of the Intermodal Transportation Terminal, Visitor Center, and NPS collections storage and research. By having the main facilities on Neck of Land, the majority of vehicular traffic would be removed from the Island. The location of the major facility in Alternative C would be remote from the Island and therefore its

interpretive and practical use for site introduction and as a programming base would be weakened.

ALTERNATIVE C FACILITIES SUMMARY

Visitor Center	18,000 sf
Collections storage, research, and curatorial	8,000 sf
Intermodal Transportation Terminal	2,000 sf
TOTAL	28,000 sf*

*Combined square footage and functions in one building

Ticket facility on Island	1,000 sf
Observation Building	5,000 sf
TOTAL	34,000 sf

In addition, this facility, as proposed under Alternative C, would split the Jamestown collection by housing the NPS collections at Neck of Land and keeping the APVA collections at the Jamestown Rediscovery™ Center. This would not foster collaborative research and study between the two organizations and would split what is essentially one collection - the Jamestown collection. Also, this alternative would not provide for the examination and display of artifacts in their original context because NPS research facilities would be remote from the Townsite.

Intermodal Transportation: From Neck of Land, alternative transportation options would be available to reach the Island. These options would include shuttle, water transport, and pedestrian/bicycle opportunities on the existing Colonial Parkway pavement. There would be no separate hike/bicycle paths in this alternative, except the path from the Glasshouse to Jamestown Settlement that is common to all of the alternatives. The hike/bicycle path in Alternative C would follow a route along the existing Parkway, out of the natural environment and in close proximity to road traffic, neither of which would be helpful in terms of

building interpretive atmosphere, nor in terms of providing points at which waysides and overlooks of the marsh and northern shore of the Island could be constructed.

Alternative D

Alternative D (Figure 2-4) proposes a reconfigured Visitor Center/educational facility/NPS collections/Observation Building on Jamestown Island, and leaves Neck of Land as it currently exists, thus maximizing previously disturbed areas and minimizing new disturbance. However, all the opportunities for interpretation and approach to the Island, as described in Alternative B, would be missed. This would significantly weaken the visitor experience. It would also seriously hinder visitor understanding of the physical context of the Island and its early history, especially in relation to local tribal presence and perspectives.

Alternative D would, however, provide new interpretive opportunities at the proposed exhibit venues, as described under Alternative B.

ALTERNATIVE D FACILITIES SUMMARY

Visitor Center	19,000 sf
Collections storage, research, and curatorial	8,000 sf
Observation Building	5,000 sf
TOTAL	28,000 sf*

*Combined square footage and functions in one building.

Visitor Center/Educational Facility/NPS Collections/Observation Building: This facility would be one large, multi-storied structure on the site of the existing 1956 Visitor Center and would house the NPS collections (moved out of the basement). The building would also include the Visitor Center/educational facility and the functions

of the Observation Building. Initial orientation, interpretive introduction, most of the interpretive exhibits, temporary exhibition, most of the collections display, the concept of the Observation Building, educational and programming facilities, offices, and visitor facilities would be housed within this one building.

In Alternative D, the Jamestown collection would remain on the Island. However, the NPS portion would not be collocated with the APVA portion. In order to move the NPS portion of the Jamestown collection above the 500-year floodplain, the existing 1956 Visitor Center would require an additional story. This facility would have to accommodate collections, research, and curatorial space. As the current Visitor Center sits within the core historic site and is already a visual intrusion, its increased size would cause it to have a greater visual impact than the existing Visitor Center.

Intermodal Transportation: The existing Island parking would remain, with no changes to Neck of Land, and there would be no pedestrian/bicycle or boat access beyond what is currently available. The existing Colonial Parkway would remain accessible to pedestrians and cyclists, and the Jamestown Explorer would be available for water tours, but no Island access. The only separate hike/bicycle path would be from the Glasshouse to the Jamestown Settlement. Mass transit options would be available via the proposed Colonial Parkway shuttle or Colonial Williamsburg buses.

Alternative E

In Alternative E, the distribution of facility structures would be similar to Alternative B, with the significant exception that the NPS collections would be remotely housed in Williamsburg or James City County.

As described under Alternative B, Alternative E would include the Intermodal Transportation Facility at Neck of Land (with the difference of

having a smaller parking lot), a Replacement Visitor Center in the existing Island parking lot, the Observation Building (smaller than in Alternatives B and C), and exhibit venues.

ALTERNATIVE E FACILITIES SUMMARY

Visitor Center	19,000 sf
Observation Building	2,500 sf
Collections storage/research/curatorial (off-site)	5,000 sf
Observation Building	5,000 sf
TOTAL	28,000 sf*
On-site	23,500 sf
Off-site	8,000 sf

Observation Building: As described under Alternative B, this facility would provide a unique interpretive experience, linking site views to artifacts and storylines. The facility location provides the best point from which to view the site in all directions, and it would provide a staging post relief from summer heat and flies, and winter rain and cold. However, the facility proposed under Alternative E would be half the size of the Observation Building proposed for Alternatives B and C, thus functions would have to be scaled back and visitors may have to visit other site venues first if lines form at the Observation Building.

NPS Collections Facility Off Site: The NPS collections facility would be located away from Jamestown in the Williamsburg/James City County area. The building would have the same requirements for safety and protection of the collections as any other collections facility for the NPS. In addition, land would have to be purchased or leased for construction of the facility.

In Alternative E, the separation of the Jamestown collection – by moving the NPS artifacts to a more remote location and leaving the APVA collection on the Island at the Jamestown Rediscovery™ Center – would seriously weaken the research strength of the Island and would undermine the interpretive concept of “Discovery.” It would also greatly diminish collaborative research benefits and interpretive support, and would have practical concerns of staffing and operations.

Intermodal Transportation: Alternative modes of transportation to the Island would be available through water transport and a separate pedestrian/bicycle path to the Powhatan Creek Overlook. This alternative would include an extensive separate pedestrian/bicycle path winding across Neck of Land and connecting with the Powhatan Creek Overlook by a new bridge across Powhatan Creek. There would also be a boat route from Neck of Land to Jamestown Island. The hike/bike route in Alternative E would cross the Neck of Land marsh to the west, providing some of the interpretive opportunities. However, it would then rejoin the Parkway, effectively destroying at this point the unique and “special” sense of arrival provided by Alternative B, which would provide a direct link to the Island, without the proximity of vehicular traffic.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

“Chapter 3: Affected Environment” describes the Jamestown Project environment that would be affected by the alternatives and/or that would affect the alternatives if they were implemented. This baseline information is necessary to understand the issues and alternatives and to determine the impacts of the alternatives, as discussed in “Chapter 4: Environmental Consequences.” Relevant impact topics were selected based on agency and public concerns, regulatory and planning requirements, and known resource issues. Topics can be grouped

into major categories: Partnerships, Resources and Environment, Research and Education, Visitor Experience, Operations, Buildings and Utilities, and Transportation and Site Access.

“Chapter 4: Environmental Consequences” provides the scientific and analytic basis for comparison of the alternatives. Impacts are described in terms of context, duration, and intensity. They include beneficial and adverse effects, direct and indirect effects, and cumulative effects. Following a description of the impacts, a discussion of long-term management and sustainability of each alternative is presented within the DCP/EIS.

In addition, for each resource impact assessment, a determination of impairment is included in the conclusion. The fundamental purpose of the national park system, established by the Organic Act and reaffirmed by the General Authorities Act, as amended, begins with a mandate to preserve park resources and values. However, the laws do give the NPS the management discretion to allow impacts to park resources and values when necessary and appropriate to fulfill the purposes of the park, as long as the impact does not constitute “impairment” of the affected resources and values. Although Congress has given the National Park Service the management discretion to allow certain impacts within parks, that discretion is limited by the statutory requirement that the NPS must leave park resources and values unimpaired, unless a particular law directly and specifically provides otherwise. The prohibited impairment is an impact that, in the professional judgment of the responsible NPS manager, would harm the integrity of park resources or values, including opportunities that otherwise would be present for the enjoyment of those resources and values. An impact to any park resource or value may constitute impairment.

An impact would be more likely to constitute impairment to the extent it affects a resource or value whose conservation is:

- Necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of the park;
- Key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park or to opportunities for enjoyment of the park; or
- Identified as a goal in the park’s general management plan or other relevant NPS planning documents.

Impairment may result from NPS activities in managing the park, visitor activities, or activities undertaken by adjacent landowners, concessionaires, contractors, and others operating in the park. Impairment of park resources and values is strictly prohibited unless provided for by law.

Major Impacts Associated with the No Action Alternative

Alternative A is likely to result in a continuation of current conditions at Jamestown Island. The NPS portion of the Jamestown collection would be in danger of damage or loss during heavy storms; no improvements to the interpretive program would be made; and operations and infrastructure would be inadequate to support future demands. As 2007 approaches, Jamestown Island would miss out on an opportunity to draw and educate increased numbers of visitors.

Major Impacts of the Action Alternatives

The action alternatives share many resource protection elements, while their respective approaches to interpretation and visitor services are substantially different in scope and scale. Consequently, some impacts are similar, while others differ in nature and magnitude. For instance, Alternative D generally has the fewest impacts to natural resources because it lacks development at

Neck of Land. However, Alternative B has the greatest positive benefits to research, education, and partnerships as it provides for joint APVA/NPS collections and opportunities for seeking new partners (i.e., water taxi, concessions, and research/monitoring of natural resources).

Partnerships

Alternative B offers the greatest number of venues to visitors and has the most benefits to partnerships. In addition to offering the greatest benefits to other partners, Alternative B would seek to strengthen the APVA/NPS partnership by combining collections, research, and curatorial facilities in an expanded Jamestown Rediscovery™ Center. Additionally, Alternative B, as well as Alternatives C and E, would provide an Intermodal Transportation Terminal at Neck of Land that would help to introduce visitors to the area and to both Jamestown Island and Jamestown Settlement, as well as provide a hub for moving between various areas of the site. Alternatives B, C, and E would strengthen partnerships with major institutional and agency partners through new research ventures; however, the APVA/NPS partnership would remain strained under Alternatives B and C due to separated collections, research areas, and common spaces.

In none of the proposed alternatives would there be a detrimental impact to any of the partners. In many instances, however, there would be beneficial impacts of each of the alternatives to many of the partners.

Resources and Environment

Each of the action alternatives would improve preservation, interpretation, and maintenance of the site's cultural and archaeological resources. Construction throughout the site, particularly in Alternatives B, C, and E, could affect known and unknown archaeological sites, and an APVA or NPS archaeologist would be present to ensure protection of archaeological sites and catalog any new finds. Impacts to historic buildings, structures, and cultural landscapes would range from negligible to

major; however, as noted below, mitigative measures would be employed to minimize the adverse impacts.

With regards to the Jamestown collection, all action alternatives seek to further protect the artifacts and archives from damage or loss. Overall impacts would be both beneficial and adverse, ranging from minor to major.

Alternatives B, C, and E would have similar impacts to a variety of natural resources, including wetland and upland habitats, floodplains, Chesapeake Bay preservation areas, threatened and endangered species, and water and air quality. Overall, impacts to these resources range from negligible to minor, with the exception of visual quality and aesthetics (minor to moderate impacts).

In all cases, for both cultural and natural resources, design considerations, best management practices, and mitigative measures would be employed to minimize impacts to resources.

Research and Education

Alternative B best achieves both APVA and NPS research and education objectives. Alternatives C, D, and E meet some of the objectives, but only Alternative B would allow for optimal collaborative research and educational programming. This alternative would include a joint campus, the replacement Visitor Center/educational facility, with facilities to support both the research and educational arms of the learning center. In addition, the collections of both organizations would be housed together at the expanded Jamestown Rediscovery™ Center. Along with these facilities would come many benefits – joint collections, staffing interactions, ease of access for researchers, and more coordinated management and interpretation. With the facilities to support an early American historical archaeology research center, Jamestown could become recognized as the premier 17th century research facility in the United States. In addition, the educational benefits of this alternative

would include dedicated education space, easy access to the site for education groups, and exhibit areas providing opportunities for students to comprehend the Jamestown interpretive themes.

Visitor Experience

Alternative B would best enable the park and APVA to achieve the goals identified in the *Jamestown Long Range Interpretive Plan* regarding the visitor experience. Under this alternative, the greatest number of interpretive opportunities would be available to visitors during pre-visit, approach, and on-site experiences. The comprehensive use of a variety of media with direct relationships to natural and cultural resources would maximize the presentation of primary themes.

Most of the positive effects of Alternative B would also result in Alternatives C and D. However, under Alternative C, the disconnected replacement Visitor Center at Neck of Land would greatly reduce visitors' time on the Island, diminishing the possibility of a seamless interpretive experience. Alternative D's lack of boat access and alternative transportation options to the Island would limit visitor understanding of the relationship of the cultural and natural resources. The reduced square footage of the Observation Building in Alternative E would limit interpretive and artifact display space.

Operations

The impacts to NPS operations under action Alternatives B, C, and E would be the same. The increased visitation to the Jamestown area and the development at Neck of Land and on the Island would result in major impacts to NPS operations. All phases of the Park's operation would need substantial increases in both staff and funding in order to accomplish the Park's mission. Alternative D would have the least impact on the Park's operations but would require some additional staff and funding. All of the alternatives would provide increased visitor contact and an enhanced interpretive experience.

For the APVA, impacts to operations would vary from minor to moderate. Under all alternatives, the APVA believes the volunteer program could be expanded to help provide additional visitor assistance.

Buildings and Utilities

All of the action alternatives require improvements to the utility infrastructure at Jamestown. Taken together, the improvements required under each alternative would result in a comprehensive and modern system of water/sewer, stormwater, electrical, and communications infrastructure. In addition to serving the utility needs of specific improvements, the development of a more complete system would be a positive cumulative impact.

Transportation and Site Access

Future year evaluations for the action alternatives determined that traffic operations on the Colonial Parkway would operate at acceptable levels even during peak season, design day conditions with all action alternatives. The presence or lack of a Colonial Parkway shuttle would not significantly change traffic operations or levels of service. Parking demand would also be accommodated in all alternatives studied.

The water taxi service proposed in Alternatives B, C, and E has significant potential to attract ridership between the Neck of Land parcel, Jamestown Island. The NPS would need to determine how the cost for this service would be paid, and whether all or a portion of the projected operational costs, would be subsidized in an increase in admission to the major Island attractions.

With Alternatives B, C, and E, the development of a comprehensive wayfinding sign program, including the use of variable message signs, would be needed to minimize visitor confusion and to maximize the use of parking lots at both the Neck of Land parcel and on Jamestown Island.

Impairment of Park Resources

While there would be impacts to both natural and cultural resources at Jamestown from each of the action alternatives, no impairment of park resources would result from implementation of any of the alternatives. Further, impacts would be minimized through mitigation, monitoring, and careful design.

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

Public involvement was an ongoing and key component of this DCP/EIS process. Every attempt was made to include the public; appropriate federal, state, and local agencies; and other interested parties in the Jamestown Project planning and design in a meaningful and productive manner.

The public involvement approach had six major elements:

- A visioning process;
- Intensive charrette;
- Project scoping process;
- Briefings for NPS and APVA staff, as well as local, state, and federal agency officials;
- Newsletters; and
- Public meetings.

From the inception of the Jamestown Project, the study team recognized that the greatest challenge to identifying feasible alternatives was not overcoming engineering and permitting hurdles, but designing alternatives that could reconcile competing visions for Jamestown Island while avoiding and/or protecting sensitive cultural and natural resources. To respond to this challenge, the team designed a public involvement approach that brought all the major stakeholders, agencies, and a distinguished group of scholars, historians, archaeologists, architects, museum planners, and educators into the study process as contributors. These constituencies worked with the study team to direct the planning efforts toward alternatives that could enhance research and educational opportunities, improve the quality of the visitor experience, and protect the Jamestown collection while preserving the tranquil beauty and character of Jamestown Island.